

Academic Achievement
**Arizona's Model for Identifying Highly
Qualified Teachers and Paraprofessionals**

Frequently Asked Questions

Q: What are the highly qualified requirements under NCLB?

A: A highly qualified teacher is a teacher with a bachelor's degree, full state certification (intern, provisional, reciprocal or standard teaching certificate) and demonstrates subject matter competency in the academic subject assigned to teach. With the exception of special education, charter school teachers are exempt from the certification requirement.

Q: Who must be reported as highly qualified under the NCLB definition?

A: All teachers in core academic content areas must be highly qualified. Core academic subjects include the following: elementary content, reading/language arts, English, mathematics, science (including the discrete areas of biology, chemistry, Physics, earth science and general science), arts (visual and music), history, geography, civics/government, economics, and foreign languages. Teachers not meeting these requirements must complete Individual Teacher Plans (ITP). Instructional paraprofessionals in any program supported by Title I funds must also be highly qualified.

Q: Are charter school teachers required to meet highly qualified teacher requirements?

A: All charter school teachers assigned to teach in core academic content areas are required to meet highly qualified teacher requirements.

A highly qualified charter school teacher is a teacher with a bachelor's degree and demonstrates subject matter competency in the academic subject assigned to teach.

Charter school teachers assigned to teach special education are required to hold an Arizona Teaching Certification in the appropriate disability area.

Q: If I am a core academic content teacher in a school that does not receive Title I funds, am I required to meet highly qualified requirements?

A: All teachers in core academic content areas must be highly qualified according to NCLB.

Q: What are the core academic subject areas?

A: *No Child Left Behind* defines the "core academic subjects" to include English/language arts/reading, science (including biology, chemistry, earth science, general science, and physics), mathematics, arts (visual arts and music), foreign language, civics and government, history, economics, and geography.

Q: *No Child Left Behind* does not list biology, chemistry, physics, general science, or earth science as core academic subjects. Does the law require teachers who teach science to demonstrate competency in the discrete science content areas?

A: While the list of core academic subjects in the law does not break out the sciences, states must consider their current certification requirements to determine what is an appropriate demonstration of subject-matter competency. Since Arizona currently requires subject-specific certification in the discrete areas of science, teachers must demonstrate competency in each discrete science area.

Q: What coursework do I need to be highly qualified in Earth Science?

A: Earth Science is a high school course. Teachers must have 24 hours in Earth Science to be highly qualified. Coursework includes agriculture, astronomy, earth science, environmental sciences, geology, meteorology, and physical geography.

Q: Are teachers teaching on an Emergency Teaching Certificate considered highly qualified?

A: Teachers teaching on an Emergency Teaching Certificate are teaching on a "waiver" and are not highly qualified.

Q: Are teachers teaching on a Teacher Intern Certificate considered highly qualified?

A: Teachers teaching on a Teacher Intern Certificate may be considered highly qualified. These teachers are participating in a State Board approved Alternative Path to Certification that meets NCLB requirements as defined in Public Law 107-110, January 8, 2002.

Q: What are the requirements for Special Education (SPED) teachers?

A: SPED teachers must have a Bachelor's degree and full state certification as a special education teacher. For SPED teachers of record in core academic subject areas, they are required to meet the same subject matter competency requirements of regular education elementary, middle grade, junior high and secondary teachers.

Q: What does it mean to be "teacher of record"?

A: A teacher of record directly instructs, evaluates, and assigns grades to students in core academic subject s.

Q: What does it mean if you are "not the teacher of record"?

A: SPED teachers do not have to demonstrate subject-matter competency in core academic subjects if they do not directly instruct students in those subjects, or if their role is limited to providing highly qualified teachers with consultation on the adaptation of curricula, or the use of behavioral supports and interventions, or the selection of appropriate accommodations, or assisting students with study or organization skills, or reinforcing instruction the child has already received from a teacher who is highly qualified in that core academic subject.

Q: Are English Language Learner (ELL) teachers required to demonstrate subject matter competency in the subject they are assigned to teach?

A: *No Child Left Behind* requires that ELL teachers demonstrate subject-matter competency in the core academic subjects they teach. For example, an elementary ELL teacher would be required to demonstrate competency in elementary content; an ELL teacher in grades 7 and 8 would be required to demonstrate competency in language arts/reading; an ELL teacher in grades 9-12 would be required to demonstrate competency in English.

Q: Are Early Childhood Special Education teachers required to meet the highly qualified teacher requirement?

A: Early Childhood Special Education teachers must be highly qualified. However, they are highly qualified based on holding the Early Childhood Special Education certificate. Arizona Administrative Code defines the common school (elementary school) as preschool children with disabilities and kindergarten programs and grades one through eight.

Q: Does the criterion for "highly qualified" apply to private schools?

A: The criterion for "highly qualified" applies to district and not-for-profit charter schools. However, private school teachers serving Title I students in a Title I program must meet the highly qualified requirements.

Q: Who must complete the Teacher Attestation(s)?

A: All core academic content area teachers are required to complete the Teacher Attestation during the first 4 weeks of each school year. Since building administrators must submit an annual Verification of Compliance on highly qualified teachers, teachers need updated Teacher Attestations to affirm the verification building administrators are required to submit to the Arizona Department of Education by NCLB Law.

Q: What documentation must be attached to the Teacher Attestation?

A: The following documentation must be attached to the Teacher Attestation:

- Copy of your transcripts if you are documenting HQT status based on a major or 24 semester hours in the content area assigned to teach, if applicable
- Copy of the HOUSSE Rubric and the documentation of the points on the HOUSSE, if applicable (only those teachers who had used the HOUSSE Rubric to become highly qualified prior to June 30, 2007).

Q: What if a teacher is teaching multiple subjects at grades 7-12?

A: Teachers assigned to teach multiple subjects in grades 7-12 must complete a Teacher Attestation in each core academic content area assigned to teach. A teacher may be highly qualified in one core academic content area and not highly qualified in another core academic content area.

Q: If a teacher is teaching grades 7-8 and the instruction is self-contained, which Teacher Attestation is the teacher required to complete?

A: The teacher is required to complete the Elementary Teacher Attestation.

Q: If a teacher is teaching music or art at grades K-6, which Attestation is the teacher required to complete?

A: The teacher is required to complete the Middle, Junior High, Secondary, Visual Arts, and Music Attestation

Q: What Master's degrees can be counted on the Middle, Junior High, Secondary, Visual Arts and Music Testament to meet the highly qualified requirements?

A: The master's degree must be in the content area(s) related to the teaching assignment. **Master's degrees in Educational Leadership and Guidance and Counseling do not meet these requirements.**

Q: May I use the HOUSSE rubric to meet highly qualified teacher requirements?

A: No.

Teachers in core academic areas who were highly qualified through the HOUSSE Rubric before June 30, 2007, are eligible to continue using the HOUSSE rubric to meet highly qualified requirements unless they change content areas.

Q: Are paraprofessionals required to meet the highly qualified requirements under NCLB?

A: Paraprofessionals with instructional duties in any program supported by Title I funds must be highly qualified at time of hire.

Q: Who is considered an instructional paraprofessional?

A: According to NCLB guidelines, an instructional paraprofessional provides one-on-one tutoring; assists with classroom management; provides instructional computer assistance, provides support in the library or media center; or provides direct instructional services under the direct supervision of a teacher in a Title I school-wide or targeted assistance program.

The following paraprofessional assignments are not included:

- Playground, bus, and cafeteria aides;
- Special education aides who attend only to the health care of students;
- Translators;
- Those whose sole responsibility consists of conducting parental involvement activities; and
- Those working in non-instructional roles.

Q: How does a paraprofessional meet the highly qualified requirements in Arizona?

A: According to federal guidance, an instructional paraprofessional in a Title I school-wide programs or an instruction paraprofessional in a Title I targeted assistance program who is paid with Title I funds are required to meet the following requirements:

- An Associates degree or 60 semester hours of coursework documented on an official transcript from an accredited institution of higher education; or
- A rigorous standard of quality as demonstrated through passage of a formal state assessment. Arizona recognizes Para Pro (1-800-772-9476), ACT Workkeys (1-800-WORKKEY), or Master Teacher's Para Educator Learning Network (1-800-669-9633).

Q: Does a paraprofessional in a computer lab have to meet the highly qualified requirements?

A: The answer depends upon the responsibilities assigned to the paraprofessional. If the paraprofessional is an instructional aide assisting students with curricular issues, the answer is "yes". However, if the paraprofessional is employed in a computer lab for maintenance, mechanical assistance, or security responsibilities, the paraprofessional would not be considered an instructional aide and would not be required to meet the highly qualified definition.

Q: Which teachers are required to have a Reading Endorsement?

A: According to State Board Rule R7-2-613F, "The reading specialist endorsement shall be required of an individual in the position of reading specialist, reading consultant, remedial reading teacher and special reading teacher or in a similar position (reading interventionist)".

Q: How can districts help teachers to become highly qualified?

A: Districts that receive Title II-A funding are required to assist teachers and paraprofessionals in becoming highly qualified. The district may assist in paying for the AEPA content knowledge test, college course work, tutoring, or professional development that will help the teacher become highly qualified.